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STRI-DHARMA

Official Organ of the Women's Indian Association

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MADRAS

Our symbol represents the ideal influence of woman, which it is the object of our Association to make an actuality in every detail of daily life in every part of India. The work has begun in the Madras Presidency (the place of the woman's feet), but its life-force springs from religion (her heart is in the region of Benares), and its intellect must be as clear and cool as the Himalayan regions into which rises her head.

Serene and self-reliant must stand each member, with hands outstretched to sisters and brothers both in the East and West, to give them from her active right hand Beauty and Prosperity represented by the lotus, the flower that bears within itself male and female qualities equally, and from the lamp in her left hand to extend the steady flame of inspiration which will light the fire of the united life of man and woman, the fire of devotion to our Sacred Religion and of love for humanity, the fire of patriotism, the fire of zeal for reform.

Thus she represents Religion, Knowledge, Organisation, Service, Beauty, Prosperity, Inspiration and Co-operation all offered freely to Mother India by each of her daughters.

Dedication.

To the women of India to-day, and to the memory of the Indian Women of all past ages who have set an example of Courage, Wisdom and Devotion to Truth.

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Women's Indian Association.

President: Mrs. Annie Besant.
Secretary: Mrs. D. Jinarajadasa.
Treasurer: Minakshiamma. (Mrs. Mahadeva Sastri.)

The Editor will be glad to receive articles suitable for publication in English and in any of the Indian languages.

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Ourselves and Our Purpose.

This is the first number of *Stri-Dharma*, the official paper of our Women's Indian Association. In this Association we are as sisters in a great family, bound together by mutual desire to help each other, and to do something for the welfare of humanity and so we greet each other through the medium of the pages of this, our first paper.

Stri-Dharma will be the voice and the ear and the eye of our members, it will speak what we would say to each other, and through the words written on its pages we shall see what our sisters would say to us.

To anyone familiar with Indian history the fact is well known that the family and the household form the basis of life in India; and again the family and social life have their basis in the recognition of every action being dedicated to God and consecrated by Him. The aim of the religious life is the aim of the perfect father and mother, daughter or son who perform each duty unto God and not unto men.

In these days when the outer life of India is changing it is necessary not to forget this spiritual basis. The old ideal of the family Dharma must be continued in the spirit of the great Teachers of old. And to-day God is very specially calling to the sons and daughters of India to offer to Him the fruit they have gathered from the mighty tree of knowledge and wisdom. Marvellous and unsurpassing teaching has been given to India and now the result in the lives of her children must be seen.

India must take her place among the great Nations, her sons and daughters must be equal in culture and capacity with those of every other land. One can dream great dreams of the glory of India's future, but now is not the time to merely dream, the ideal must be striven for, the dream made a reality.

Every educated Indian knows that there are things that are holding him back, in his forward march to freedom, and chief among these obstacles is the lack of education and development of so many Indian women, for "Woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink together . . . she scales with man the shining steps of nature . . . If she be small, slight natured, miserable, how shall man grow?" The future of India lies largely in the hands of the women, the mothers and wives of India, for they guide and train and teach the coming rulers of the Motherland during the most important time of their lives, the years of childhood and preparation for their future great work.

It is certain that many great souls are desirous of coming to India to take part in the reconstruction of life here; what will have to be the condition for these, and for every boy and girl in the future? First there will have to be proper cleanly, airy, sanitary conditions when the little body is born; in far too many cases this is by no means the condition now. Women obviously should have a knowledge of hygiene, of food values, of those elementary facts which will prevent so much of the disease and suffering prevalent in India among children. Always it should be remembered that the body is the temple of God, and therefore it must be gently guided to do what is right, *not* beaten, or hit. There must be knowledge and science brought into the training of the strong, great race of the children of India to be. But how can strong, wise sons come from child mothers who are weak and ignorant, and do not know the simple fundamental laws of sanitation and hygiene?

Men and women are equal before God, and the blot on the fair fame of India to-day is the ignorance of her daughters.

And further, very many of our women are widows, and some also there may be whose vocation is not the married life; these must be given, if they wish it, the opportunity to train themselves along any line that attracts them. Some may wish to be teachers, some doctors or nurses of the sick; others may wish to climb intellectual heights or to work in some science or art. The time has come when it should be realised for the sake of India, that India's daughters must be given the opportunity of developing themselves in every branch of education, art, or science that they wish to follow. Without doubt there is the desire in their hearts, but most of India's sons have up to now not realised their responsibility in these things, and have held their sisters back, while themselves crying out for Education.

So to-day Mother India demands that all her children shall unite in a new ideal of mutual comradeship and helpfulness, that together they shall go forward to the glory of the New Free India that is coming.

So we hear the call, and must answer, not merely by saying, "Oh yes, I, as a thinking man, quite agree with all this." *Something must be done.* India groans under the weight of splendid promises of help that have not been fulfilled. For our women's sake, in this matter we must not only sympathise, we must contribute something to the furtherance of this work. The Women's Indian Association therefore has been started the outline of its work and ideals is as follows:

NAME.

Women's Indian Association.

OBJECTS.

To present to women their responsibility as daughters of India.

To help them to realise that the future of India lies largely in their hands; for as wives and mothers they have the task of training and guiding and forming the character of the future rulers of India.

To band women into groups for the purpose of self-development and education, and for the definite service of others.

MEMBERSHIP.

Women who agree and will co-operate with the objects of the Association may be members.

Groups of women having the same aim, can be affiliated to the Women's Indian Association without change of name or organisation, if desired.

ORGANISATION.

The Association has a central organisation at Adyar, Madras.

Branches are formed in every place where possible, with a local Secretary to arrange the work to suit local conditions and report to Head-quarters.

The aims and ideals and work of the Association are on a religious basis.

WORK

The work of the Branches naturally depends on the capacity and desire of the members. Each Branch meets regularly and undertakes some definite work and study of an educational character.

Help is given in the suggestion of subjects, books and possible lines of work to be carried on.

FUNDS

There are no subscriptions but it is hoped that the heavy expenses of Printing, Postage etc., may be met altogether by voluntary contributions.

Our Present Strength (January, 1918.)

The Association since its start has grown rapidly and it now has Twenty-nine Branches and over 800 members and the number is continually and steadily increasing.

There are now Branches :—

Adyar (Madras) Head-quarters

Bellary	Alleppey
Bhavnagar	Benares
Calicut	Bombay
Coimbatore	Chikmagalur
Erode	Chingleput
George Town (Madras)	Ernakulam
Madura	Lashkar
Mysore	Madanapalle
Namakal	Nanded
Saklaspur	Pollachi
Tanjore	Salem
Tiruvattar	Thirumiyachur
Vellaikaranpudur	Trivandrum
	Vellore

and a group of unattached members.

The work done by the Branches is very varied in character, some have regular lectures in First Aid and nursing, some study books of Elementary Science, Hygiene or Domestic Economy. Some learn needle-work and cutting out. One Branch has, owing to the energy and devotion of the Secretary, started classes for poorer girls, where they are taught English, needle-work, etc., besides organizing lectures and classes for the Branch members. Another Branch is reviving village industries, weaving, etc.

Some Branches meet three or more times a week and study English or some subject in the mother tongue and also have weekly lecture.

Most of the Branches send in reports and are all meeting regularly and doing good work.

And while cultivating the mind the body is not neglected and some branches have Badmington Courts and play regularly.

This periodical is published by the Association and issued free to all members. It is hoped that voluntary contributions may be sufficient to cover expenses without a regular subscription to members.

The Future.

So in five months our work has become well established and now we ask for the help and co-operation of all who love India and look for the day when she is honoured and free among the nations of the world.

We want Branches of the Women's Indian Association started in every town and village to be definite educational centres for women.

We need in India many more schools for girls, where a good Indian education can be obtained suitable to the conditions and requirements demanded by the future of the girl, and where she is taught her own Religious Faith whatever it may be. But in the many towns and villages, where girls' schools do not exist or where the girls have left school while still children and far from educated, there we need Associations which will do all that is possible to impart useful and practical knowledge to its members. This the Women's Indian Association seeks to do to the uttermost in its power.

We record with happiness and gratitude help that we have received from many Indian men in thes tarting of Branches and encouraging the work in many ways. And we earnestly ask all Indians to help us, both in the organization and with the necessary financial needs that are increasingly heavy in a rapidly growing organization. And we appeal specially to Indian men to realize the great need in India to-day of education for women, to urge, to inspire, to encourage women to educate themselves and form Associations for mutual study and help. So shall the daughters of India, aided by their brothers, become more useful, more efficient, more able to serve the Great Mother.

Our President.

Our Association is honoured by having as its President that most great and revered of women Mrs. Annie Besant. She was one of the pioneers to help English women in their economic difficulties and in India her voice has ever been heard speaking for Indian women, urging the need for their education and not only speaking but herself founding girls schools and inspiring others to do the same.

A few days after her release from internment at a garden party Mrs. Besant ended her speech with the following words:

"And may I not add to that welcome those whose sex I have the honour to share? They have spoken out with unfaltering voice and have done their share in winning our freedom for us again. And to them I shall say, as I have said so often, that the real practical application of truth to life is to be found in Indian women even more than in Indian men. Wherever they have touched public questions in the last few years, they have succeeded: they spoke for South Africa where Hindu marriage was threatened, and the result was the triumph of Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi and their friends. They spoke against indenture in Fiji only this year in the spring and the result is that the indenture has vanished. And they spoke, and they prayed and they had their processions, and our prison doors were swung open before their voice, and to this great struggle we welcome them, for no Nation is made of men alone. The wives of a Nation give courage to their husbands, the mothers of a Nation train the generation that will inherit our work in freedom, in self-respect, in nobility of character. No bird can fly with one wing: no Nation can rise with only one sex taking part in the National life. We are not indentical, we have differences but in the differences complementary and not antagonistic, lies the perfection of humanity. There is no Deva without his Devi. You cannot have the spirit without the matter which it inspires and which embodies it, and according to the Hindu view, the Shakti is the true power of Deva and in the help of the representatives of the Shakti will lie the certain triumph of India in the Nation and in the Indian home; and so it is that we go forward full of courage."

The Women's Indian Association.

Some Ideals underlying its name,

by Margaret E. Cousins, Mus. Bac.

All the experiences of humanity have proved that if many people unite for one large purpose more can be done than by each one working separately. "Union is strength," we have learnt. Though one single hair of the head is weak and can be easily broken, the strength of many hairs put together is so great that by her two plaits alone Miss Tarabai, the Indian Lady Sandow, is able to raise from the ground a great stone weighing 250 lbs. The Women's Indian Association is a similar linking together of many people who, though individually incapable of exerting much influence, may by their union raise the great weight of ignorance from the minds of their sisters and brothers.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ASSOCIATION.

Children are gathered together to be taught in schools; young men meet together for recreation and social service; people of all kinds associate together in large numbers to further religious, political and social purposes. It is through association of a number of people within a home that the primary physical needs of each individual are supplied. But the members of the home have in every country found that they must go outside their own family group and combine voluntarily with members of other families in order to gain more knowledge, experience, and ability in managing affairs. In India, however, custom and convention have ignorantly and unfairly decreed that the home is sufficient for all the needs of women and a narrow conception of household dharma is used to prevent women from any broad form of associated life, or knowledge of the world. Yet how can a mother train her children right to face difficulties in life of which she is herself ignorant?

The enforced separation of women into small family groups causes them to become timid, weak, and conservative, and denies them a necessary means for full human development. If, for instance, ten young married women in a village or town or street wish to study in their free afternoon hours some special subject like First-Aid, Sewing or English, it will be easier for them to face critics of the novelty if they all meet in one place, and one hour of teaching will do what would take ten hours if each had to be taught separately. Time, money, energy will be saved by the association of people for a common purpose. Each member of the Association will gain more knowledge of people and things, and feel greater courage, ability and determination to put into action what has been learnt.

THE NECESSITY FOR ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN.

Men have always known the value of Association for furthering their special interests as is proved by the many sabhas, samajs, leagues and societies, in this country. Most of their doors, however, are closed to women owing to the narrow and false view commonly held by men regarding women's (1) nature, (2) nurture, (3) needs and (4) national responsibilities. (1) Men have for centuries past considered women inferior to themselves. They credit them with a different kind of nature whereas the fact is that women are as important human beings as men, with souls above the minor distinctions of physical sex. (2) By denying woman an equal status as a human being, men have given her few or no opportunities for education, public service, freedom of thought, speech or action. (3) The needs of women are supposed to be certain female details. There is not the breadth of understanding which realises that the needs of a human soul are greater than those connected with sex merely. Besides, no man can ever fully understand a woman, or satisfactorily express her views on all life's problems. (4) Though motherhood is honoured, its importance in the national life is not fully realised, nor are women given any chance to say what they consider the best conditions for the bearing and rearing of children of strong physique, consequently there is a weakening of the race which is indeed a national calamity. In these days the national life is interlinked with the home by laws and conditions which affect women and children as well as men, and women's national responsibility does not end with life within the home only.

At a recent deputation of Indian ladies to th[e] Viceroy concerning the fate of women in the Indentured labour system. His Excellency said "there are many matters in which the Government of India would be greatly helped if they could get the advice and help of women," and he instanced the education of women, hygiene, sanitation, and the scourge of consumption, adding "on all these it would be of inestimable value if women of position and education would institute a campaign of instruction amongst their fellow-country women."

It is even more necessary for women to work in Associations than for men, because only by joint action can the excessive modesty, nervousness and lack of self-confidence of the young wife be overcome. Through carrying on such women's samajs, unaided by men, they will discover their own strength, they will learn to consider themselves as a sex in no way inferior to men and will act accordingly. They will in their meetings cultivate self-reliance and independence so that later there may be true interdependence between men and women.

Women's Associations will promote the mass education of women first in a general

elementary way, then in particular directions dealing with the care of children, sick-nursing, sanitation and good housing conditions. They will encourage women to use their natural love of beauty in the service of their country by demanding beautiful vessels, cloths, homes, gardens, etc., and it will be one of the aims of such associations to teach women how to make their own beautiful things so that their villages, towns, and countries shall be self-productive and self-supporting. By these practical arts women will gradually grow to understand their relationship to public questions and if they find their power of service handicapped by old laws and customs they will bravely insist on better conditions.

Free and compulsory education may do much for the next generation of women, but nothing can help the women of the present in large numbers but voluntary Associations.

INDIAN WOMEN IN ASSOCIATION.

There is evidence that in pre-Vedic times women were as free as men but the first half of the Kali Yuga brought them under deplorable limitations. Now the lowest point of the Yuga has been reached and in order that the prophecy shall be fulfilled that "Women in the Kali-Yuga will be proficient in all vidyas (branches of knowledge)" Shakti, the Divine Energy, the Feminine Power of Divinity, has sent forth a great wave of new life to rouse women to a knowledge of their full nature and dharma.

She has wakened women all over the world and the Great War in Europe has especially brought women's work and importance into a prominence and recognition it never had before. Indian women cannot be the only women to remain untouched by the fresh inspiration increased self-expression and service. Already in their hearts they are responding to its call and vaguely wishing some change could be made in women's lives. But only by the efforts of Indian men and women can India be lifted to its former condition when the great heroines of India freely lived and worked. The Indian women of to-day must first join and meet together for purposes of mutual improvement, even in small numbers, in their towns and villages, then these scattered societies will be linked into one great all India organisation. Through these groups women will call together their own conferences, formulate their own plans of reform and progress and finally when they have proved their own powers of independent service and thought, combine freely and equally with their brothers in every sphere of life.

THE WOMEN'S INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

The Women's Indian Association has been started to encourage the formation of Branches all through India and to link them and other already existing women's samajs, sabhas, seva sedans etc., into one large united body, so that each included society, small or large, may gain strength from its feeling of union with other similar activities all through India, so that women may feel the bond of their common womanhood and its aspirations whatever be their barriers of language, custom, education or religion.

Into this Association are invited all Indian women whether Hindu, Mohammaden, Parsi or Christian, and also Western women sympathetic with their Indian sisters, for the essential trials, work and responsibilities of woman are the same all the world over—their common humanity is greater than any race difference when matters of birth, life and death are under consideration.

To join and form Branches of this Association is a practical first step for women to take who are longing to know more and to do more for the sake of their sisters, their children, their men and their country.

Men's efforts to advance India will prove of little avail if their womanhood remains in a state of ignorance and conservatism, so a most important part of national service for men at present must consist in encouraging women everywhere to start strong Branches of this Association and in helping them to attend their meetings regularly.

The present unnatural social gulf between Indian men and women must be bridged by a happy free companionship of the sexes such as is found in all later civilisations.

The women of to-day must become as great as India's past heroines—modern Gargis, Chitras and Meerabai's.

The inspired philosophic and spiritual ideals of divinity in its feminine aspects found in Indian religions must be reflected in the actual daily conditions of women's life showing itself as equality of opportunity for

the full and free development of their bodies, minds and souls in self-expression and service. The ideal "Mother India" will only be attained as she is manifested in the daily life of every Indian mother.

To serve in bringing about these so necessary changes is the aim underlying the formation of the Women's Indian Association which all women readers are asked to join and all men readers to encourage and support.

Suggestions for conducting a Branch meeting.

BY D. JINARAJADASA.

Owing to the very varying conditions existing in the different parts of India and in each locality, it is not possible to ask Branches to follow any set form of meeting. Each Branch of the Association must organize its own affairs as determined by itself to suit its own conditions. But I wish to make a few suggestions to be followed or not entirely as the Branches wish themselves.

I think that the members of a Branch should meet regularly once a week if possible. At the beginning and end of the meetings a few moments might be spent in meditation upon Ishwara the eternal Source of Wisdom, if possible music and singing could be introduced. I add below some verses in Sanskrit and translations into Tamil and Telugu which may be found useful. If English verses are needed they can be arranged. Then, if a lecturer is available, the lecture could be delivered, but usually it will be very likely that some one able to give a regular lecture will not be present and then a book should be read by one member and explained and discussed by all the meeting.

The character of the work must of course depend very much on the capacity of the Branch; some might take up a course of science or study a foreign language, while others might have lessons in learning to read and write their own vernacular. The chief thing is to do *something*, for each Branch to select a definite subject to study and to meet regularly and to work for a definite time. It is important to be thorough in the work, for each member in the group to understand and grasp what is being studied. It might be found useful for each member to write short essays on the subject of the study and at the next meeting the essays could be read and discussed at the beginning of the meeting before taking up the continuation of the subject.

In this world there is so much around us of which many are hardly aware, so much that is beautiful or interesting, and it would be beneficial for all of us to be able to look on the world, the sky, the trees, the flowers, the people, with intelligence and understanding.

There are many things that for the welfare of India and the Indian people it is necessary that Indian Women should know and understand; these might be classified under four headings, Social Reform, Education, Artistic and Domestic. I give the different subjects under each heading and one or more should be choosen for definite study by each Branch.

SOCIAL REFORM.

Hygiene. (The science of health.)
Cause and prevention of desease.
Care of children.
Sanitation, cleanliness.
Our duty to the lower classes and castes and outcastes.
Education of lower classes.
Citizenship, the duties of men and women to the community.

EDUCATIONAL.

Reading and writing in the Mother tongue.
English or another language.
Some branch of science:

Astronomy	(about stars)
Botany	(about flowers and trees)
Physiology	(about our bodies)
Biology	(about life)
Zoology	(about animals)

History of India.
Geography.
Literature.
Study of life in other countries.
Books of travel.
Lives of Heroines and Heroes of India.
Lives of Heroines of all lands.

DOMESTIC.

Food values.
Plain sewing and fancy work.
Cutting out and making garments.
Knitting and crotchet.
First Aid to the injured. Nursing.

ARTISTIC.

Music.
Painting.
Singing.

Will each Branch write and tell me what subject they will study, either one mentioned above or some other of their own choosing? I will then suggest books, and notes on the subject can be given in this paper.

If there are any of the younger members in a Branch who cannot read or write their own Mother tongue, I would very strongly recommend that they should learn to do so. Perhaps some member who can read would start a small class herself to teach her sisters. A new world of interest and instruction is opened to one who can read and there is a literature belonging to each of the Indian languages that should be read by all women speaking those languages.

Another most useful and necessary thing for women is to be in touch with current events and to know what is going on in the country in which they live and in the world at large. So it would be well for each Branch to take in a newspaper and to read it. In these days when events are moving so quickly and things of such vital importance are happening in India and in every other country in the world, the women of India must know and understand what is occuring, for they have their own interests equally with men, in the great issues that are now at stake, and women have their part to play in this making of the Indian nation. An excellent Tamil Paper is the *Swadeshi Mitram* and in Telugu is the *Andhara Patrika*, and in English are *New India* and the *Bombay Chronicle* and in other languages there are also good newspapers which will be well-known in the districts where they are spoken.

At Madanapalle a Branch that is doing most splendid work, a badmington court has been made and the members meet there very often and play regularly. Physical culture is as necessary for girls and women as for boys and men and to build up strong healthy bodies, women should take exercise and play games, such as badmington and tennis. So it would be a very good thing if other Branches could follow the good example of Madanapalle.

THE VERSES.

భారతమహిళా సమాజములోని ప్రతిశాఖా సమాజము వారు తమతమ సభాకార్యములను తాము నిర్ణయించుకొను లాగున జరుపుకొనవచ్చును. ఒక అంశమునుమాత్రము నేను సూచించెదను. అదేమన - సామాజికులు సభ చేరునపుడు మొదటను కడపటను కొన్ని నిమిషములకాలము విద్యకెల్ల శాశ్వతమూలభూతుడైన పరమేశ్వరుని మనస్సున ధ్యానించవలయును.

ఈ క్రింద వ్రాయబడు సంస్కృత, ఆంధ్ర, అరవభాషల లోని ప్రార్థనలను సామాజికులు ఇష్టపడినయెడల సభ చేరు కాలములలో ఉపయోగించవచ్చును. ఇవిగాక వేఱే ప్రార్థనలనుకూడ చేర్చుకొనవచ్చును.

శ్లో॥ ఏణీలోచనపల్లవ ।
పాణీహారినీలవేణీ పద్మజా ।
రాణీవీణాపుస్తకపాణీ ।
వాణీనాజిహ్వయందు వసియింపగదే ॥

ఉ॥ క్షోణితలంబు నెన్నుదురు సోఁకఁగ మ్రొక్కి నుతింతు సైకత
శ్రోణికిఁ జంచరీకచయ సుందరవేణికి రక్షితామర ।
శ్రేణికిఁ దోయజాతభవ చిత్తవశీకరణైకవాణికిన్ ।
వాణికి నక్షదామశుక వారిజ పుస్తక రమ్యపాణికిన్ ॥

ॐ

(१) सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहै ॥ ओं शान्तिश्शान्तिश्शान्तिः ॥

(२) उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

(३) या कुन्देन्दुतुषारहारधवला या शुभ्रवस्त्रावृता
या वीणावरदण्डमण्डितकरा या श्वेतपद्मासना ।
या ब्रह्माच्युतशंकरप्रभृतिभिः देवैस्सदा पूजिता
सा मां पातु सरस्वती भगवती निश्शेषजाड्यापहा ॥

(४) स्वस्ति प्रजाभ्यः परिपालयन्तां
न्याय्येन मार्गेण महीं महीशाः ।
गोब्राह्मणेभ्यः शुभमस्तु नित्यं
लोकास्समस्तास्सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

Peace Chant.

1. మమ్మును ఈశ్వరుడు రక్షించుగాక, మనయందు ఆతను సంతోషించుగాక, విద్యాసామర్థ్యమును పొందుదముగాక, మనము చదివిన శాస్త్రము సఫలమగుగాక, మనము ద్వేషించకయుండుదముగాక ॥ ఓం శాన్తిః శాన్తిః శాన్తిః ॥

2. అజ్ఞాననిద్రనువిడిచిలెమ్ము, మేల్కొనుము, పెద్దలను జేరి తత్త్వము తెలిసికొనుము.

Prayer to Sarasvati.

3. ఎవరు కుందపుష్పమువలె చంద్రునిబోలె మంచువలె ముత్తెపుహారమువలె తెల్లగనున్నారో, ఎవరు తెల్లవస్త్రమును

[illegible]నియున్నారో, ఎవరు ఉత్తమ వీణాదండముచే నలంకరింపబడిన హస్తముగలవారో, ఎవరు తెల్లతామరయందు కూర్చుండియున్నారో, ఎవరు బ్రహ్మ విష్ణు మహేశ్వరాది దేవతలచే ఎల్లప్పుడు పూజితురో, నిశ్శేషముగ అజ్ఞానమును పోగొట్టు అట్టి సరస్వతీమహాదేవి నన్ను రక్షించుగాక.

Benediction.

4. ప్రజలకు క్షేమముగుగాక, రాజులు న్యాయయుక్తమైన రీతితో భూమిని పరిపాలించుగాక, ఎల్లప్పుడు గోబ్రాహ్మణులకు శుభముగుగాక, సర్వజనులు సుఖులైయుందురుగాక.

பாரதமஹிளாஸமாஜத்தின் ப்ரதி சாகாஸமாஜத்தார் தங்கள் தங்களுடைய ஸபாகார்யங்களைத் தாங்கள் நிர்ணயித்துக்கொள்ளுகிறபடி நடத்திக்கொள்ளலாம். ஆனுல் ஒரு அம்சம் மாத்ரம் நான் ஸூசனம் பண்ணுகிறேன். அதாவது, ஸாமாஜிகர்கள் ஸபை கூடும்போது முதலிலும், கடைசியிலும் சில நிமிஷ காலம், வித்யைகளுக்கு சாச்வத மூலபூதனுன பரமேச்வரனை மனதில் தியானம் செய்யவேண்டும்.

இதனடியில்வரும் ஸம்ஸ்கிருதம், தெலுங்கு, தமிழ் பாஷைகளிலுள்ள ப்ரார்த்தனைகளை ஸபையோர் இச்சைப்பட்டால் ஸபைகூடுங்காலங்களில் உபயோகிக்கலாம்.

இவைதவிர வேறு பிரார்த்தனைகளையும் சேர்த்துக்கொள்ளலாம்.

சீர்தந்தவெள்ளிதழ்ப்பூங்கமலாசனத்தேவிசெஞ்சொற்
ஞர்தந்தவெண்மனத்தாமரையாட்டிசரோருகமேற்
பார்தந்தநாதனிசைதந்தவாரணப்பங்கயத்தாள்
வார்தந்தசோதியம்போருகத்தாளை வணங்குதுமே.

Peace Chant.

1. ஈச்வரன் நம்மை இரக்ஷிக்கட்டும், அவர் நம்மிடத்தில் ஸந்தோஷப்படட்டும், வித்தியாஸாமர்த்தியத்தை அடைவோமாக, நாம் படித்த சாஸ்திரம் ஸபலமாக, நாம் துவேஷிக்காமல் இருப்போமாக.

2. அஜ்ஞான நித்திரையைவிட்டு எழுந்திருங்கள், விழித்துக்கொள்ளுங்கள், பெரியோர்களை அடைந்து தெரிந்துகொள்ளுங்கள்.

Prayer to Sarasvati.

3. யார் குந்தபுஷ்பம்போலும், சந்திரன்போலும், பனிபோலும், முத்தாஹாரம்போலும், வெளுப்பாயிருக்கிறுளோ - யார் வெளுப்பு வஸ்திரத்தை உடுத்திக்கொண்டிருக்கிறுளோ - யார் உத்தமமான வீணு தண்டத்தை கையில் வைத்திருக்கிறுளோ - யார் வெண்டாமரையில் வீற்றிருக்கிறுளோ - யார் பிரம்மா - விஷ்ணு - சிவன் முதலான தேவதைகளால் எப்பொழுதும் பூஜிக்கப்படுகிறுளோ, அப்பேர்ப்பட்ட பகவதியாயும் பாக்கியில்லாமல் ஜடத்தன்மையைப் போக்கடிக்கிறவளாயுமிருக்கிற அந்த ஸரஸ்வதியானவள் என்னை இரக்ஷிக்கட்டும்.

Benediction.

4. பிரஜைகளுக்கு க்ஷேமமுண்டாகட்டும், ராஜாக்கள் பூமியை நியாயமாக பரிபாலிக்கட்டும், எப்பவும் பசுக்களுக்கும் பிராஹ்மணுளுக்கும் சுபமுண்டாகட்டும், ஸமஸ்தமான ஜனங்களுக்கும் ஸௌக்யமுண்டாகட்டும்.

இந்திய ஸ்திரீகளின் சங்கம்.

(ஒரு பெண்மணியால் எழுதப்பட்டது.)

பிரும்மஞான சங்கத்தில் வெகு பிரஸித்தி அடைந்தவராகிய மிஸ்டர் ஜீனராஜ தாஸாவின் மனைவியாகிய மிஸ்ஸஸ் டோரதி ஜீனராஜ தாஸா நமது பெண்களின் அபிவிருத்தியை உத்தேசித்து மேற்போட்டுக்கொண்டிருக்கும் உத்தமமான வேலையின் தன்மையை நம்மவர் அறியவேண்டி இந்த வியாசம் ஒரு இந்துப் பெண்மணியால் எழுதி நமக்கு அனுப்பப்பட்டது. அதை வெகு சந்தோஷத்துடன் நாம் பிரசுரம் செய்கிறோம்.

ப. ர.

இந்திய ஸ்திரீகளின் முன்னேற்றத்தை யுத்தேசித்து "இந்திய ஸ்திரீகளின் சங்கம்" என்ற பெயர்கொண்ட ஒரு ஸமாஜமானது மிஸ்ஸஸ் ஜீனராஜ தாஸாவினுல் அடையாற்றில் ஸ்தாபிக்கப்பட்டு, அதன் ஆதரவின்கீழ் கிளைச்சங்கங்கள் இந்தியா முழுவதிலுமுள்ள ஒவ்வொரு பட்டணத்திலும் கிராமத்திலும் ஏற்படுத்தப்பட வேண்டுமென்ற நோக்கத்துடன், அந்த சீமாட்டி அனேக இந்திய பிரமுகர்களுக்கு அனுப்பியிருக்கும் அறிக்கையைப்பற்றி எல்லோரும் பத்திரிகைகளில் படித்திருக்கலாம். இவர் அன்னியதேசத்தில் பிறந்திருந்தும், இந்திய ஸஹோதரிகளின் கேவலமான நிலைமையையும், அதனுல் நம் தேசத்துக்குண்டாகும் அனேக தீங்குகளையும் பார்த்து அனுதாபங்கொண்டு, இவர்களை முன்னேற்றவேண்டுமென்ற உன்னத நோக்கத்தினுல் தூண்டப்பட்டு இச்சங்கத்தை எல்லா விடங்களிலும் பரவச்செய்து அதன்மூலமாய் ஸ்திரீகளை ஞானத்திலும், கல்வியிலும் தேசிய உணர்ச்சியிலும் புருஷர்களுக்கு ஸமானமானவர்களாய்ச்செய்து அவர்களோடு தேசத்தின் அபிவிருத்திக்காக ஒற்றுழைக்கும்படி செய்யவேண்டுமென்பதே இவருடைய நோக்கம். இவ்வளவு தாரான சிந்தையுடனும் பரோபகார எண்ணத்துடனும் இவர் நம் தேச நன்மைக்காக வுழைக்கிறதற்காக இந்தியர்களெல்லோரும் இவருக்கு மிகவும் கடமைப்பட்டவர்களாயிருக்கிறுர்கள்.

இப்பொழுது நம் தேசத்தில் இவ்விதமான சங்கங்கள் ஸ்தாபிக்கப் படவேண்டியது அவசியமாவென்னும் விஷயத்தைப்பற்றி சற்று நாம் யோசிக்கலாம். நம் ஸ்திரீகளின் தற்கால நிலைமை மிகவும் கேவலமாயும் அன்னிய தேசத்தார்களால் இகழப்பட்டதாயுமிருக்கிறதென்பதற்கு சந்தேகமேயில்லை. ஒவ்வொரு நாகரீகமடைந்த தேசத்திலும் ஸ்திரீகள் கற்றவர்களாயும், ஞானவதிகளாகவும், தாரான நோக்கமுள்ள

வர்களாயு மிருக்கையில், நம் தேசத்தில் மாத்திரம் அவர்கள் அஞ்ஞானம் என்னும் அந்தகாரத்தினால் சூழப்பட்டு கண்ணிருந்தும் குருடர்களா யிருக்கிறார்கள். இந்திய ஸ்திரீகளில் பெரும்பான்மையோருக்கு கல்வியின் வாசனையே தெரியாது. பள்ளிக்கூடங்களில் போய் 10, 12 வயதுவரையில் படித்த சிறுமிகளின் ஞானம் நிரம்பவும் சொல்பமென்று சொல்லவேண்டும். ஆகையால் ஸம்பூர்ணமாய் கற்ற ஸ்திரீகள் இந்தியாவில் லக்ஷத்தில் ஒருவர்கூட இருக்கமாட்டார்கள். இந்தத் தாழ்மையான நிலைமையில் நம் ஸ்திரீகள் வைக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் வரையில் நம்முடைய தேசம் மற்ற தேசங்களுக்கு ஸமானமாக வரமாட்டாது.

கல்வியின் சிறப்பையும் அதினால் நமக்குண்டாகும் பிரயோஜனங்களையும் நான் இங்கு விவரித்து எழுதவேண்டியது அனாவசியம். புத்தியிருக்கும் ஒவ்வொருவனுக்கும் கல்வியின் உபயோகங்கள் உள்ளங்கை நெல்லிக்கனிபோல் விளங்கும். கல்வியை சாதாரணமாய் வெளிச்சத்துக்கு ஒப்பிடுவார்கள். எப்படி ஒருவனுக்குக் கண்ணிருந்தும் வெளிச்சமில்லாமல் போனால் குருடனாகிறானோ அதேமாதிரி புத்தியிருந்தும் கல்வி கற்காமல்போனால் மூடனாகி விடுகிறான். தவிர, நீண்டகாலம் ஒருவன் வெளிச்சமில்லாத விடத்திலேயே வசித்துக்கொண்டுவந்தால், அவன் கொஞ்சநாளுக்கெல்லாம் பார்க்கும் சக்தியை யிழந்துவிடுகிறான். அதுபோலவே ஒருவன் நிரம்ப காலம் கல்லாமலே யிருந்துவிட்டால், அவன் தன் புத்தியை ஒரு விஷயத்தில் செலுத்தி ஆலோசிக்கும் சக்தியை யிழந்துவிடுகிறான். அதாவது அவனுடைய புத்தி மழுங்கிப்போய்விடுகிறது. ஆகையால் ஸ்திரீகளுக்கும், புருஷர்களுக்கும், ஸமமாய் ஈஸ்வரனால் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் புத்தியை ஒவ்வொருவரும் உபயோகிக்கவேண்டும். அப்படி நாம் செய்யாவிட்டால் அவரை நாம் அவமதித்ததாகும். கடவுளால் நமக்குக் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் கண்களால் நாம் எப்படி அவரால் ஸ்ருஷ்டிக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் விநோதங்களைப்பார்த்து ஆனந்தப்படுகிறோமோ, நமக்குக் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் காதுகளால் அதி சிலாக்கியமான கோகிலம் முதலான பறவைகளின் கானங்களைக்கேட்டு எப்படி நாம் சந்தோஷப்படுகிறோமோ நமக்குக் கடவுளின் கிருபையால் கிடைத்திருக்கும் அனேக அவயவங்களால் அவரால் நியமிக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் ஸன்மார்க்கமுள்ள கருமங்களைச்செய்து நம் மிஷ்டங்களை நாம் எப்படி பூர்த்தி செய்துகொள்ளுகிறோமோ அதேமாதிரி அவரால் நம்மெல்லோருக்கும் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் புத்தியினால், நாம் நிரம்பவும் விநோதமான இந்த ஜகத்தினுடைய ஸூக்ஷ்மங்களையும் ரஹஸ்யங்களையும் அறிந்துகொள்ள முயலவேண்டும். அதாவது கல்வியினால் நம்முடைய புத்தியை தீக்ஷணமாய்ச்செய்து ஞானத்தைப்பெறப் பிரயத்தனம் செய்யவேண்டும். இப்படியிருக்க, நம் தேசத்தில் புருஷர்கள் மாத்திரம் கல்வி கற்கப் பிரயத்தனப்பட்டுக்கொண்டு, ஸ்திரீகளுக்குக் கல்வி கற்பிக்காமலிருப்பது இயல்புக்கு விரோதமாகும்.

ஆகையால் எல்லா ஸ்திரீகளும் கல்வி கற்பதை ஈஸ்வரனால் நியமிக்கப்பட்ட கடமையென்று கருதவேண்டும். இதை நம்முடைய மதத்தின் முக்கியமான கொள்கையாக நாம் நினைக்கவேண்டும். பூர்வீக காலங்களில் நம் முன்னோர்கள் கல்வி ஒவ்வொருவருக்கும் இன்றியமையாததென்று அறிந்து புருஷர்களுக்கும் ஸ்திரீகளுக்கும் வித்தியாசமில்லாமல் கல்வி கற்பித்தார்கள். நம்முடைய பூர்வீக சரித்திரத்தில் பண்டித சிரோமணிகளாய் விளங்கின அனேக ஸ்திரீகளைப்பற்றி நாம் படித்திருக்கிறோம். மைத்ரேயி, கார்கி முதலிய ஸ்திரீ ரத்னங்களோடு வேதாந்த விஷயங்களில் புருஷர்கள்கூட ஸம்வாதம் செய்து தோல்வி யடைந்திருப்பதாக நாமெல்லோரும் கேட்டிருக்கிறோம். தவிர, பெண்களும் பையன்கள்போலவே தங்களுடைய குருவின் ஆஸ்ரமத்தில் அனேகவருஷங்கள் தங்கியிருந்து வித்தையை கற்றுக்கொண்டுவந்ததாகச்சொல்லப்படுகிறது. கல்வி கற்று முடிகிறவரையில் பிரம்மசாரிணிகளா யிருந்தார்கள். இவ்விதமான நல்ல வழக்கங்களெல்லாம் நம் தேசத்தைவிட்டு நீங்கினது நம்முடைய துர்ப்பாக்கியம். இனிமேலாவது நம்முடைய தப்பெண்ணங்களையெல்லாம் கைவிட்டு நம் முன்னோர்கள் காட்டியிருக்கும் மேன்மையான வழிகளை அனுஸரிக்க நாம் பிரயத்தனம் செய்யவேண்டும். ஆகையால் மிஸ்ஸஸ் டோரதி ஜினராஜ தாஸாவினால் செய்யப்படும் பிரயத்தனங்கள் நம் முன்னோர்களின் நோக்கங்களையே யனுஸரித்திருப்பதால், நாமெல்லோரும் இச்சங்கத்தை ஆதரிக்கக் கடமைப்பட்டிருக்கிறோம்.

இந்திய ஸ்திரீகளுக்குக் கல்வி கற்பித்தால், நம்தேசாசாரங்கள் முழுவதும் கெட்டுப்போய் நாமெல்லோரும் மேல்நாட்டார்கள்மாதிரி ஆகிவிடுவோமென்று அனேகர் அபிப்பிராயப்படுகிறார்கள். நம் வாலிபர்களுக்கு இப்பொழுது கற்பிக்கப்படுகிற மாதிரியே நம் சிறுமிகளுக்குக் கல்வி கற்பிக்கப்பட்டால், இவர்கள் அபிப்பிராயப் படுகிறது போலவே முடியுமென்பதற்கு யாதொரு ஸந்தேஹமுமில்லை. தற்காலத்தில் அனுஷ்டிக்கப்படும் கல்வி ஏற்பாட்டினால் நம் வாலிபர்களுக்கு அனேக தீங்குகள் உண்டாயிருக்கின்றனவென்று எல்லோருக்கும் தெரியும். ஏனென்றால் நம்முடைய கலவி முறை, நம் தேசீய தர்மத்தை யனுஸரிக்காமல் பரதேசீய தர்மத்தை யனுஸரிக்கிறது. ஆகையால் இவ்விரண்டு தேசங்களின் துராசாரங்களை, தற்கால படிப்பாளிகள் மேல்கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். ஆகையால் நம் தேசீய வாழ்க்கைக்குத் தகுந்தபடி கல்வி முறை சீர்திருத்தப்பட்டு பெண்களுக்கு கற்பிக்கப்படவேண்டும். நம்முடைய தேசீய ஆசாரத்தையும், சீலத்தையும், தர்மத்தையும் நாம் ஒருபொழுதும் கைவிடக்கூடாது. அப்படி நாம் செய்வோமேயானால், அது உலகத்துக்கே ஒரு பெரிய நஷ்டமாகும். நம் முன்னோர்களால் ஸ்தாபிக்கப்பட்ட ஸநாதன தர்மமானது எல்லாராலும் புகழப்படும்பொழுது, இந்தப் புண்ணிய பூமியில் அவதரித்திருக்கும் நாமே இதைத் திரஸ்கரிப்பது பயித்தியக்காரத்தனமாகும். நம்முடைய ஸ்திரீகளால் தான் இதுவரையில் இது பாதுகாக்கப்பட்டு வந்தது ஆகையால் இதை யனுஸரித்தே அவர்களுக்கு நாம் கல்வி கற்பிப்போமேயாகில், இதன்

சிறப்பு இப்பொழுதிருப்பதைவிடப் பதின்மடங்கு அதிகமாய் விளங்கும்.

இப்பொழுது நம் தேசீய தர்மம் நிரம்பவும் அழுக்கடைந்த ரசனம்போ லிருக்கிறது. புருஷர்களும் ஸ்திரீகளும் ஒன்றுகூடி உழைத்தால்தான், இதை மூடிக்கொண் டிருக்கும் அழுக்கைப் போக்கடிக்க முடியும். இப்படி ஒற்றுழைப்பதற்கு இருவர்களும் ஸமமான ஞானத்தையும் சக்தியையும் பெற்றிருக்க வேண்டும். தத்காலத்தில் இந்த ஸமத்வம் இல்லாததால், ஸ்திரீகளுக்குத் தகுந்த கல்வியை கற்பிக்கவும், ஞானத்தைப் புகட்டவும் வேண்டிய ஏற்பாடுகளை நாமெல்லோரும் செய்யவேண்டும். இப்படி நாம் செய்யாவிட்டால் நம்முடைய தேச தர்மமும் குலதர்மமும் நாளுக்குநாள் க்ஷீணித்துக் கடைசியாய் இருந்தவிடம் தெரியாமல் போய்விடும். நம் முன்னோர்களால் நிரம்பவும் சிரமத்துடன் சேகரிக்கப்பட்ட முக்கியமான விஷயங்களெல்லாம் ஒருவருக்கும் பிரயோஜனமில்லாமல் போய்விடும். ஆகையால் உலகத்துக்கெல்லாம் உண்டாகக்கூடிய இந்த பெரிய நஷ்டத்தை ஒவ்வொரு இந்தியனும் தடுக்கக் கடமைப்பட்டவனாயிருக்கிறான்.

சென்ற அனேக வருஷங்களாய் நம் தேசத்தை, ராஜாங்க விஷயங்களிலும், ஆசார விஷயங்களிலும் சீர்திருத்த, நாம் பிரயத்தனம் செய்துவருகிறோம். ஆனால் நம்முடைய முயற்சிகளெல்லாம் வீணாகி வருகின்றன. இதற்கு முக்கியமான காரணம் நம் ஸ்திரீகளின் அஞ்ஞானந்தான். அவர்களுடைய ஒத்தாசை யில்லாமல் நாம் முன்னேறுவது அசாத்தியமென்பதை நாமொவ்வொருவரும் அறியவேண்டும். ஆகையால் இத்தனை வருஷங்களாய் நாம் வீணாய்க் கழித்த காலத்தை ஸ்திரீகளின் நிலைமையை மேன்மைப் படுத்துவதில் கழித்திருந்தால் நம்முடைய நோக்கங்கள் அனேகமாய்க் கூடியிருக்கும். ஆகையால் எல்லா விஷயங்களைக் காட்டிலும் பெண் கல்வியென்னும் விஷயம் ரொம்பவும் முக்கியமா யிருக்கிறபடியால் அதற்காக நாமெல்லோரும் நம்மால் கூடியவரையில் உழைத்தால், நம்முடைய தேசம் நாகரீகமடைந்த தேசங்களி லொன்றாகக் கருதப்படும்.

இவ்வுலகத்தில் அவதரித்த எல்லா மஹான்களும் தங்களுடைய தாயார்களின் வல்லமையினால்தான் தாங்கள் உன்னதமான பதவியை யடைந்திருப்பதாகச் சொல்லியிருக்கிறார்கள். ஆகையால், தகப்பன், தாய், இவ்விருவர்களுக்குள், தாய்தான், குழந்தையை நல்வழியில் நடத்தி ஸன்மார்க்கமுள்ள மனிதனாகச் செய்வதில், முக்கிய காரணமா யிருக்கிறாள். இன்றைக்குப்பிறந்திருக்கும் குழந்தைதான், நாளைக்கு விளங்கப்போகிற பிரமுகன் ஆவான். ஆகையால் அதி பால்யத்தில் அவன் எப்படி வளர்க்கப்படுகிறானோ அதுமாதிரியே அவன் ஆயுள்பர்யந்தமிருப்பான். ஆகையால் பால்யபருவத்தில் அவனுடைய சரீரத்தையும் மனதையும் நிரம்பவும் ஜாக்கிரதையாயும் புத்திசாலித்தனமாயும், தாய்மார்கள் பாதுகாக்க வேண்டும். இதற்குக் கல்வி ரொம்பவும் அவசியமென்று நாம் சொல்லவேண்டியதில்லை. தத்காலத்தில் தாய்மார்களுக்கு குழந்தைகளை ஸரியாய்ப் பேணும்வழிகள் கொஞ்சமேனும் தெரியாது. அவர்களுக்குத் தகுந்த ஆஹாரமும், உடுப்பும், மற்ற சௌகர்யங்களும், சாதாரணமாய் தாய்மார்களால் கொடுக்கப்படுகிறதில்லை. அதனால் அக்குழந்தைகளின் சரீரம் நாளுக்குநாள் பலஹீனப்பட்டு அனேகவிதமான வியாதிகளுக்கு ஸரியான ஆஸ்பதமாகின்றன. சில குழந்தைகள் இறந்தும் போகின்றன. இந்தியாவில் சிசு மரணம் எல்லா தேசங்களைவிட நிரம்பவும் அதிகமென்று எல்லோருக்கும் தெரிந்த விஷயம்.

குழந்தைகளின் சரீர நிலைமை யிப்படியிருக்க, அவர்கள் மனதினுடைய நிலைமை இதைவிடக் கேவலமாகி விடுகிறது. சரீர ஆரோக்கியத்திற்கு ஆகாரம் வேண்டியதுபோல் மனம், புத்தி இவைகளின் ஆரோக்கியத்திற்கும், புஷ்டியான ஆகாரம் கொடுக்கப்படவேண்டும். இதைத் தாயார் தவிர மற்ற யாரும் கொடுக்க முடியாது. இவர்களால் கொடுக்கப்படும் ஆகாரம் அபத்தியமா யிருந்தால், குழந்தைகளின் மனதுக்கும் புத்திக்கும் கூட வியாதி வந்துவிடுகிறதென்பது நிச்சயம். அதாவது குழந்தைகளுக்கு தைர்யம், தேசாபிமானம், மனவுறுதி, காருண்யம், தைர்யம் முதலிய குணங்கள் ஏற்படாமல், கேவலம் சுயநயம் பாராட்டுகிறவர்களாயும் பயங்காளிகளாயும் துன்மார்க்கர்களாயும் ஆகிவிடுகிறார்கள். இவர்கள் தங்கள் தேசத்துக்கு ஒருவிதமான நன்மையையும் செய்ய சக்தியற்றவர்களாகி விடுகிறார்கள். அதனால் தேசம் நாளுக்குநாள் க்ஷீணித்து வருகிறது.

இவைகளைத் தடுக்க ஒரே உபாயந்தானிருக்கிறது. அதாவது ஸ்திரீகளுக்குத் தகுந்த கல்வி கற்பிப்பதுதான். தேக ஆரோக்கியம், சுகவழி, குழந்தைகளைப் பேணுதல் முதலான விஷயங்கள் அவர்களுக்கு முக்கியமாய் கற்பிக்கப்படவேண்டும். இவைகளை நன்றாயறியாமல் ஒரு ஸ்திரீயாவது இருக்கக்கூடாது. தவிர அவரவர்களுக்குப் பிரியமாயிருக்கும் சாஸ்திரமும், கலையும் போதிக்கப்பட வேண்டும். இந்த நோக்கங்களைக்கொண்டே மிஸ்ஸஸ் டோரதி ஜீனராஜதாஸா இந்தியா முழுவதிலும் இந்திய ஸ்திரீகளின் சங்கங்களை ஏற்படுத்தி, இந்திய ஸ்திரீகளை ஒன்றுகூட்டி அவர்களுக்கு, உபன்யாஸங்கள், மூலமாயும், போதனை மூலமாயும், கல்வி கற்பிக்கப்படவேண்டுமென்கிற எண்ணத்துடன் செய்கிற முயற்சிகளை நாமெல்லோரும் ஆதரித்து, அவருடன்கூடி ஒத்துழைக்கவேண்டும். நாம் அப்படிச் செய்தால்தான் நம்முடைய ஸ்திரீகள் மேன்மையான பதவியை யடைந்து நமக்குத் தகுந்த உதவிகளா யிருப்பார்கள். அப்பொழுதுதான், நாம் இத்தனை வருஷங்களாய்த் தனியாய் பிரயத்தனம் செய்தும் அடையாமலிருக்கிற சீர்திருத்தங்களெல்லாம், நாமும் ஸ்திரீகளும் ஒன்றுகூடிச் செய்யும் முயற்சிகளால், அடையப்பட்டு நம் தேசம் உன்னதபதவியை யடையுமென்பதற்கு யாதொரு ஸந்தேஹமுமில்லை.

சுதேசமித்திரன் என்ற பேபரிலிருந்து மேற்படி பேபரின் பத்திராதிபருடைய அனுமதியின்பேரில் பிரசுரம் செய்யப்பட்டது.

స్త్రీవిద్యాభ్యాసము.

భారతీయ వనితల విషయమై కొన్ని ముఖ్యాంశములు ఇపుడు గమనింపతగినవి యున్నవి. వానిలో నొకటి యేదన—మన ఆచార వ్యవహారములలో ప్రకృతమున గలుగు మార్పులు. దినదినమునకు మన పూర్వాచారములు మారుచు క్రొత్తవి ఆచరణమునకు వచ్చుచున్నవి. వానిలో కొన్ని మంచివి కొన్ని చెడ్డవిగా నుండవచ్చును. పూర్వాచారము లన్నియు మంచివనియు నూతనాచారములన్నియు చెడ్డవని చెప్పుట కలదు కాని అది అంత సరికాదు. స్త్రీవిద్యాభ్యాసమే ఇందునకు ఉదాహరణము. ఆడవారికి విద్య చెప్పకూడదనియు, వారికి విద్యవలన ప్రయోజనములేదనియు, అందువలన చెడుగుకూడ కలుగుననియు చెప్పు పెద్దలు మనలో నింకను ఉన్నారు. ఇప్పటి ధర్మశాస్త్రములుకూడ అదేరీతిన చెప్పునట్లున్నవి. అయినను ఇటీవల కొన్ని సంవత్సరములుగ ఆడబిడ్డలకు విద్య చెప్పించు పద్ధతి వాడుకవచ్చినది. శాస్త్రమునకును వృద్ధాచారమునకును విరుద్ధముగ కనుపడు ఈ వాడుక యుక్తమా అయుక్తమా అని విచారించుట సహజము. చక్కగ విచారించు వారికి ఈ క్రొత్తవాడుక అశాస్త్రీయమనికాని పూర్వాచార విరుద్ధమనికాని అనర్థకరమనికాని అగుపడనేరదు. శాస్త్రములనుచూడ పూర్వకాలములో ఆడబిడ్డలకు మగబిడ్డలవలెనె ఉపనయనాది సంస్కారములుచేసి విద్య చెప్పించు పద్ధతి యుండినట్లు తెలియవచ్చుచున్నది. పూర్వాచారముకూడ ఆపద్ధతియే ఆచరణములోనున్నట్లు తెలుపుచున్నది. ఎట్లన—వేదమంత్రములలో అనేకములు స్త్రీలు చెప్పినవి యున్నవి. గార్గియను నామె బ్రహ్మవాదినియై యాజ్ఞవల్క్య మహామునితో బ్రహ్మవిషయమై వాదించెననునది తెలిసినవిషయమేకదా. మైత్రేయియను సతీమణి తనపతి యాజ్ఞవల్క్యునివలన బ్రహ్మవిద్యనుపొంది సంన్యాసినియై బ్రహ్మవిద్యా ప్రచారముచేసినట్లు ఇతిహాసముకలదు. సులభయను రాజకుమారి యోగసిద్ధిజెంది జనకమహారాజుతో యోగవిషయమై వాదమునలిపినట్లు తెలియవచ్చుచున్నది. స్త్రీలకు విద్య అనర్థకరమనునది సుతరాం అయుక్తము. ఈకాలమందు నాగరికజనులలో నంతటను స్త్రీలు విద్యావంతులై యున్నారు. అందువల్ల వారికి సంపత్తును ఐశ్వర్యమును హెచ్చియున్నది. స్త్రీలు విద్యావంతులయి యున్నంతకాలము మనదేశమునందును ఐశ్వర్యము మొదలైనవి అత్యధికమ్ముగనే యుండినవి. ఈలాగున విద్యవలని ప్రయోజనములు స్పష్టముగ కనుపడుచుండ అది అనర్థకరమని చెప్పుట న్యాయ్యమా? ఇట్టి ప్రత్యక్షముగ హితకరమగు విషయములలో వారివారిబుద్ధికి యుక్తమని తోచుదోవలోనే నడువవలసినదికాని కాలకాలమునకు మారుచువచ్చిన పూర్వసంప్రదాయములలో నొకదాని ప్రకారమే నడచుకొనవలయుననుట సరికాదు.

స్త్రీవిద్యాభ్యాసమువలన దేశాంతరములలో నగుపడు అనర్థములు మన ప్రాచీన విద్యాభ్యాసక్రమము ననుసరించిన యెడల తొలగునను నమ్మిక దృఢముగనున్నది. ప్రాచీన పద్ధతిలో బ్రహ్మచర్యనియమము ముఖ్యాంశము. అందులోను ఆహారనియమము శౌచము గురుభక్తి మొదలైనవి గమనింపతగినవిషయములు. ఇదిగాక వేదోక్తమగు గృహస్థధర్మము ఆడవాండ్లకును స్పష్టముగ తెలిసినయెడల ఎట్టియనర్థములకు అవకాశముండ నేరదు. సరియైన గృహస్థధర్మము ప్రకృతమున తఱుచుగ ఆచరణములో గనుపడదు. అది తెలిసినయెడల దేశాంతరమున కన్పడు స్త్రీవిద్యవలని అనర్థములు విద్యావంతులగు భారతీయవనితలయందు కలుగవు.

అ. మీనాక్షమ్మ.

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